



Maine Forest Service Ice Storm Newsletter #3 October 26, 1998



COST-SHARING NOW ALLOWED FOR BRIDGES UNDER SIP5

The USDA Forest Service has ruled that bridges are now cost-shareable under the Stewardship Incentive Program. The ruling came that bridges will be allowed if the state BMPs have recommendations for them, which the State of Maine does. Bridges may be included in the construction of forest access corridors. Landowners wishing to take advantage of this change will need to apply at the appropriate county Farm Service Agency Office for SIP5 (Soil & Water Protection & Improvement), component 47ICE (Construction of Forest Access Corridors) and component 408 (Forest Land Erosion Control System).

The State of Maine Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook for Maine Timber Harvesting Operations: Best Management Practices, lists the following specifications for bridge planning and construction:

Name of BMP: Bridge (log, metal, or combination)

Definition: A structure constructed of logs, metal or a combination of materials to carry a haul road or skid road over a stream or other body of water.

Purpose: To provide means of crossing a stream and other bodies of water to enable a more direct route of travel and to keep equipment out of water.

Conditions Where Practice Applies: Water crossings where culverts cannot be used or when a broad, low span is needed to cross the water.

Effects of Practice on Water Quality: Allows continued flow of water and minimal interruption of the natural water course.

Planning Considerations:

- ❶ Become familiar with road and water locations, soils, topographic and ground conditions in the timber harvest area.
- ❷ Delineate on the planning map areas where water crossings will be required.
- ❸ Determine adequate sizing of bridges as follows:
 - ♦ For roads that will continue to be maintained bridge openings should be designed to accommodate a 10-year frequency storm flow or the bridge opening cross section must be at least 2½ times the stream cross sectional area.
 - ♦ For roads that will be discontinued or unmaintained, bridges should be removed and the stream banks cleaned up, seeded or stabilized.

If the bridge is to remain it must be sized to accommodate a 25-year frequency storm flow or the bridge opening cross section must be at least 3½ times the stream cross sectional area.

- ❹ Determine estimated traffic volume, type of traffic and weight of loads anticipated to use the bridge. In consultation with an engineer or licensed forester with appropriate education and experience, design the bridge to accommodate the anticipated traffic.
- ❺ Determine whether or not the road will continue to be maintained upon completion of activities.
- ❻ Select a location where the water channel is straight, unobstructed and the road will cross at right angles to the channel.
- ❼ Select banks that are firm and level; approaches that are of shallow slope allowing diversion of runoff away from the stream.
- ❽ Design measures to prevent erosion and sedimentation during construction.
- ❾ Determine whether or not the proposed bridge requires any local or state permit approval.

Specifications:

- ❶ Adequately size bridge opening to handle anticipated stream flow.
- ❷ Excavate banks just enough to establish a firm base for the foot of the bridge. Do not excavate below the normal high water mark unless recommended by an engineer or other professional experienced in such excavation.
- ❸ Use logs or metal beams, size them such that they will support anticipated vehicle and loads.
For log bridges it is best to peel, square, or 2-side the timbers.
- ❹ Anchor bridges to prevent washout in periods of high water.
- ❺ Do not gravel the deck; gravel holds moisture that can cause the deck to rot.
- ❻ Seed and mulch any disturbed areas outside the road bed to minimize erosion.
- ❼ Maintain bridge with periodic inspections and removal of any debris which may clog or hinder stream flow.
- ❽ If the bridge is to be discontinued or unmaintained and the bridge cross section is not adequate to handle 25-year frequency storms, the bridge



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should be removed if authorized by the Director, Maine Forest Service and the stream banks cleaned up, seeded or otherwise stabilized.

- ⑨ Placement of bridges that require work in the stream should be done when the water level is low and in as short a period of time as is possible.

Remember that there is a \$10,000 cap per landowner per year under the Stewardship Incentive Program. Take this into account when recommending, designing, and implementing forest access corridor construction activities.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANCE AND SIP UPDATE

As of October 20, 1998, the Forest Stewardship Assistance Program has obligated more than \$1,275,000 for forest management planning cost-share assistance. This translates into 587 new Forest Stewardship plans covering 83,803 acres, 188 updates to existing Stewardship plans covering 26,238 acres, and 191 Woodlot Assessments for 20,253 acres; for a total of 966 plans over 130,294 acres. Applications are still coming in at a rate of about 20 per day. Many landowners have expressed concern that obtaining the services of a consulting forester is becoming harder to do and time must be reserved several months away.

More than \$209,000 worth of practices has been approved under the Stewardship Incentive Program for ice storm damage mitigation. The majority of the requests have been for construction or cleanup of roads and trails. The Farm Service Agency county offices have finally received the computer software that they need to process claims under the ice storm Stewardship Incentive Program, so applications, approvals, and payments will be moving along more smoothly.

The Maine Forest Service will be sending a letter out in December to all landowners who have signed up for either a new or an updated Forest Stewardship Plan to remind them that they are eligible for SIP funding.

THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM "PLEDGE"

We have received many questions from landowners and consultants regarding the Forest Stewardship Assistance Program "Pledge". An information sheet has been developed to help explain what the pledge means. The most common questions have been:

"Do I need to sign a pledge for a simple Woodlot Assessment?"

YES. Due to the source of the funding under the federal Forest Stewardship Program, all plans cost-shared with these dollars must be accompanied by the appropriate signed pledges, both upon application and included in the completed plan.

"Does signing the pledge obligate me to accept a plan that does not meet my objectives?"

NO. The landowner is not obligated to accept a plan that does not meet his/her objectives. The landowner and consultant need to work together to formulate a plan that meets the landowner's objectives and is based on sound, sustainable forestry practices.

"Does signing the pledge mean that the landowner is obligated to follow the plan to the letter?"

NO. Signing the pledge means that the landowner will follow the plan to the best of his/her ability. It does not mean that the landowner is required to follow the plan without consideration of changing objectives or conditions.

"Does signing the pledge mean that the landowner is obligated to work with a particular consulting forester for the duration of the plan?"

NO. Once the landowner has paid the consultant the fee owed for professional services for completion of the plan, the landowner has no obligation to continue working with the consultant who drew up the plan. However, The Maine Forest Service strongly urges landowners to develop an ongoing working relationship with a professional forester to help them achieve their objectives for managing their land.